

Delaware Launches Statewide Teacher Recruitment Effort

The state is leading a new effort to recruit top educators to teach in Delaware schools.

The campaign, "Join Delaware Schools," aims to attract the caliber of teachers necessary to realize the state's vision of a world-class education system for all students. Central to the campaign is the launch of an online teacher recruitment portal – www.joindelawareschools.org – that gives applicants a one-stop site to look for and learn about education jobs in the state. Join Delaware Schools is the first statewide teacher recruitment effort of its kind.



Gov. Jack Markell met with education students at the University of Delaware Wednesday to encourage them in their studies and stress the importance of retaining top teachers in Delaware schools.

"The research could not be clearer: Teacher quality is the most important school-related factor in a student's academic success," Markell said. "This site's resources are an important tool to highlight the benefits of teaching in Delaware, to help us attract and retain the best teachers, and to make it easier for high-quality applicants to apply for teaching jobs in our state."

By having a central hiring website and one common application for every school in the district, the portal will make it easier for schools to recruit and retain high-quality educators.

"We know great teaching leads to great learning. We want to attract those educators who share our commitment to ensuring every student graduates from our schools with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and career," Secretary of Education Mark Murphy said.

While the campaign and portal will assist in recruiting efforts, hiring decisions will remain at the local level with district and charter school human resources administrators continuing to lead this work for their districts and schools.

The applicant tracking feature of the portal piloted in the spring with a soft launch of the full site in August. Thanks to the portal, funded by part of the state's federal Race to the Top grant, applicants no longer must check every district and charter school's individual site to find job openings. The aim is to include all vacancies in the state in one place. To date, eight districts and 14 charters have signed on to the portal. By 2016, all districts and charters will be expected to use the site.

Colonial School District recently signed on.

"The Colonial School District strongly endorses www.joindelawareschools.org because it creates a competitive edge for school districts in its talent acquisition process. Specifically, I am pleased by the portal's capabilities and features including data collection, filtering, and communication with applicants," said Eugene Mayo, director of human resources. "Although our district has recently joined the portal, I am already seeing an increase in applications which will ultimately lead to new hires."

Over the next several months, the state will launch a promotional campaign and host recruitment events in partnership with the state's colleges and universities and districts and charter schools. The site will be updated with other information, such as professional development

opportunities, state- and district-wide news and events, survey results and blogs.

The launch of the campaign followed the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration release of its [Delaware Teacher and Administrator Supply and Demand Survey Analysis Report](#). Funded by the state, the report is an analysis of a survey of all 19 school districts and 16 of the 22 charter school personnel directors, as well as an analysis of data from the Delaware payroll system. The report was presented to the State Board of Education at its September meeting.

The report charts the trends of teacher and administrator hiring, difficult-to-fill positions, late hiring and other factors important to the success of the state's public schools. The report highlights an increase in earlier hiring for the 2012-13 school year, with 52.9 percent of hires in July or earlier, as compared to 51.4 percent in 2011 and 35.7 percent in 2010. Through the new portal, the hopes to improve upon its recruitment efforts and continue the trend of earlier hiring in the coming years.

The Teacher Hiring Task Force created by Lt. Governor Matt Denn and Sen. Dave Sokola led to legislation signed into law in 2011 that helped Delaware become competitive with surrounding states in hiring teachers earlier in the year than previously allowed. A bill signed into law by Gov. Jack Markell in March 2012, extended an "estimated unit count" for school districts in April of each school year. While the official unit count used to authorize state funding for teachers does not occur until fall, The bill guaranteed schools they would receive at least 98 percent of the funds for paying teachers calculated in the spring, allowing them greater confidence in the amount of state funding that they will receive to pay new teachers and thus be able to hire earlier.

“Until we passed this legislation, we were losing great teaching candidates to surrounding states and too many teachers were coming on board after the start of the school year,” said Lt. Governor Matt Denn. “The number of teachers hired before August over the last two years has dramatically increased, which is great for our students and our schools. We are getting great teachers, signed up early and coming in ready to teach our children.”

District officials who participated in the portal’s pilot endorsed the new tool.

“I have found www.joinlawareschools.org to be a great avenue for hiring staff for the Woodbridge School District. The site is user-friendly on the applicants’ side and my side, too,” said Jason Cameron, director of human resources for the district.

Seaford School District recently made its 57th hire from using the site.

“Our district has seen an increase in applications and interest in the positions we have had available,” said Stephanie Smith, director of human resource development and public information. “For smaller districts such as Seaford with more limited local resources, efforts such as this partnership are crucial to ensuring that we are able to get the best and the brightest staff into our classrooms during our hiring season.”